

STRANGE DAZE

A Journal of Extraordinary
Experiences, and Theories
ingeniously devised to
explain them.



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News, Reviews and more strange happenings from around the region



BUFORA IN THE DOCK: The debate continues

Letters from Jenny Randles, Ken Phillips, and John Spencer

NUFORI NORTHERN UFO RESEARCH & INVESTIGATION

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Investigations: Please contact G.H. Dixon on 0191 2368375 for any matters relating to UFO sightings or other strange experiences.

NUFORI is a small group of local UFO investigators, researchers and writers. Since UFOlogists invariably end up arguing and punching each other, NUFORI does not hold regular meetings. I blame it on the fluoride in the water.

ηαὺ ερισ! ἀλλ ηαὺ δισχορδία!

STRANGE DAZE

EDITORIAL. I was on the telephone to an old friend of mine a couple of weeks ago, and the conversation turned to the subject of UFOs. My friend knows very little about the phenomenon, and I did my best to explain all about UFOlogy inside five or ten minutes. I tried to answer his questions about alien spaceships, faster than light travel, alien abductions, and so on. I told him that even after all of this time, we still have no definite answers, and I went over some of the alternatives to the extraterrestrial hypothesis: Earthlights, Albert Budden's electromagnetic hypothesis, fairy abductions, the links between UFOs and magick and the paranormal, all were mentioned. I think my friend went away as confused as the rest of us.

About half way through the above conversation I became suddenly very aware of just how... bizarre were some of the things that I was saying. All of the theories mentioned above are somewhat off the beaten track, and there I was, talking about them in a calm, everyday, almost mundane fashion. Being so familiar with these different UFOlogical theories, I forget how strange it all must seem to an outsider with no previous interest in the field. I suspect that my friend went away thinking that I had completely lost my marbles in the twelve months since he had last seen me. I also suspect that this is a problem for UFOlogists everywhere and for UFOlogy in general. We all know that the media treat UFO stories as light entertainment. It's hard for an outsider to take something so weird seriously. This is understandable, but very annoying at times.

On the other hand, I am aware that some of the other members of the UFO community probably regard me as a sceptic, or a hard and scathing non-believer. Well, I would like to state here in black and white my own thoughts and feelings on the UFO phenomenon.

I don't believe that UFOs are alien spaceships, although I do believe that other life forms almost certainly exist in other parts of the universe, and that faster than light travel may one day become possible. While I don't deny the possibility that the occasional alien scout pod may survey our little mud ball, I cannot believe that there is enough interstellar traffic to generate all of the unsolved UFO reports. Similarly, I don't believe that alien abductions are simply the result of alien scientists selecting human guinea pigs and performing experiments. These "aliens" can vanish like ghosts and float abductees through solid walls. And the kind of experience you have also seems to depend upon which researcher you go to...

The beings involved in close encounters and abductions are certainly "alien", but are they extraterrestrial? I remain unconvinced. They seem to belong to the same family as demons and goblins, werewolves and red eyed mothmen

that also terrorise people from time to time, only to vanish without trace, leaving only a scared witness and a report on an investigator's desk.

I cannot believe that all these witnesses are lying, hallucinating or have over active imaginations. What, then, are we left with? I'm not quite sure. But I am starting to suspect that we are dealing with some kind of external intelligence that is touching the minds of certain special, sensitive people. The beings involved are paranormal, certainly not physical in the way that you and I are, and may belong to the murky realms of magick.

By now, some of you will be thinking that I am definitely off my trolley while others will be thinking, "well, I've known that for years!". And some of you will probably never speak to me again, for saying that I don't believe in aliens. I may change my mind as the months go by, it all depends upon which way the evidence (such as it is) points me. Right now, that's the way it is pointing, and I can't say that I'm very comfortable with it. I would be much happier if the evidence did point towards little green men from Zeta Reticuli but, alas, it's not that simple.

What I do know for certain is that this is a genuine phenomenon. UFO reports, close encounters and abduction reports are worth studying. Ultimately, this research will lead us to a better understanding of the world that we live in, and a better understanding of the way that the human mind works. To do this we need to listen to what the witnesses are saying. To listen hard, with an open mind.

Having studied physics, I know that the world is a pretty weird place. Check out quantum theory, one of the most fundamental and successful theories ever devised. (Resume reading this article after you have run down to your local library and read through anything you can find on quantum mechanics.)

Freaky, huh? Designed to turn brilliant young students into wobbling acid casualties. But that's the way the universe works. Far out, man.

Although it's really a matter of personal opinion, there can't be many theories in the field of UFOlogy that are stranger than Quantum Theory. But while the average person in the street is unlikely to be suddenly confronted by an example of quantum barrier tunnelling, or a sudden curvature in the structure of space time, the average person out there may well see a UFO. We like to think that we live in a nice, neat, orderly world. But it isn't. What happens is random and unpredictable, and often catastrophic. We are constantly surrounded by the weird and wonderful, but often we don't realise it until our attention is drawn to it. What I quickly came to realise when I became involved in UFOlogy is that the uncommon, the paranormal, is actually surprisingly common. If you don't have a ghost or UFO story to

tell yourself, ask your friends. I bet you know someone who has experienced something very odd.

I take my hat off to any UFO researcher who is willing to brave the media and the public in order to try to increase public knowledge and interest in the phenomenon, and to bring in more reports. Dealing with the media is a necessary evil, and it isn't easy. I particularly respect those UFO witnesses who are willing to go public with their own stories, and to face the ridicule and disbelief that go with it.

The Santilli film footage of the alleged Roswell aliens has created a huge amount of interest, with the national broadsheet newspapers covering the story and the BUFORA Sheffield Congress, and Channel 4 running a documentary on Roswell including some of the footage. I would argue that all of this interest can only be a good thing. I have spoken to a lot of people since August who, having had no prior interest in UFOs, have now heard of Roswell and they want to find out more. (So I tell them to buy an excellent little publication called Strange Daze.)

For me, any analysis of the film starts with actually viewing the footage. Readers of the last issue of S.D. will know that I was reserving judgement on the film until I had actually seen it down in Sheffield. Well, now I have seen it, I am prepared to go on record and say that it looks like a hoax to me. That was also the opinion of most of the other delegates that I spoke to at the Congress. I spoke to special effects man John Lundberg who seemed convinced that it was a latex dummy. The camera work was not particularly good, and the autopsy itself was performed far too quickly. I'm sure that if it was an EBE (extraterrestrial biological entity) there on the slab, a little more care and time would have been taken. Also, the story surrounding the film does not make sense. Surely the military would make sure that they collected all of the canisters of film from the cameraman? Also, the body does not fit in with witness accounts of the alien bodies, although they too have to be treated with caution. It will be very interesting to see what date is actually given to the film when it is analysed. If it does date from 1947, and it is from a military source, then I suspect that perhaps it was part of a "what if?" type exercise. Curiouser and curiouser, but very entertaining. I shall await developments with much interest.

Unfortunately, the UFO community is still split on the subject of the film, with BUFORA and Philip Mantle coming in for some severe criticism over the way the film has been handled, and in particular some of Mantle's comments in the press. If Philip is found to have been out of line as a

spokesman for BUFORA, I hope that BUFORA will deal with him in an appropriate manner; but come on folks, it's hardly as though he dressed up in a turquoise body suit and claimed to be a prophet for the Intergalactic Council (although I know that is what he is! *). Of course, members of the UFO community have every right to be critical if they think that this has been mishandled, but some of the criticism is coming from people who have absolutely no right to talk about commercialism or the correct handling of UFO material. I dread to think what would have happened if the Santilli film had dropped into the hands of some other UFO groups.

Incidentally, the Sheffield Congress was a great success, and everyone that I spoke to enjoyed being there. There were some excellent speakers, in particular Cynthia Hind from Zimbabwe, Dr Leo Sprinkle from the US, Peter Robbins and Larry Warren from the US (on the Rendlesham Forest incident), and of course Scotland's Malcolm Robinson who kicked things off to a brilliant start on the Saturday morning. To finish, I would just like to thank Gloria, Rod, Julie, Peter, Pam, Becky and lots of other folk that I met for making Sheffield THE place to be on an August weekend. Cheers.

* Humour. For those unfamiliar with the concept, look it up. I'm fed up with trying to explain it.



NEWS.....

BUFORA Regional Lectures in Newcastle. The first quarterly lecture will be held in the Sutherland Building, University of Northumbria on Northumberland Road, Newcastle on Saturday 28th October 1995. The speaker will be Mr Eric Morris of the British UFO Studies Centre, who was written to Strange Daze with some details of his lecture (see the Letters section). The lecture will be held from 2 to 5pm and there will be a half hour break for refreshments. Tickets will cost £1.50 for BUFORA members, £2.50 for non-members and £2 for students, OAPs, UB40s.

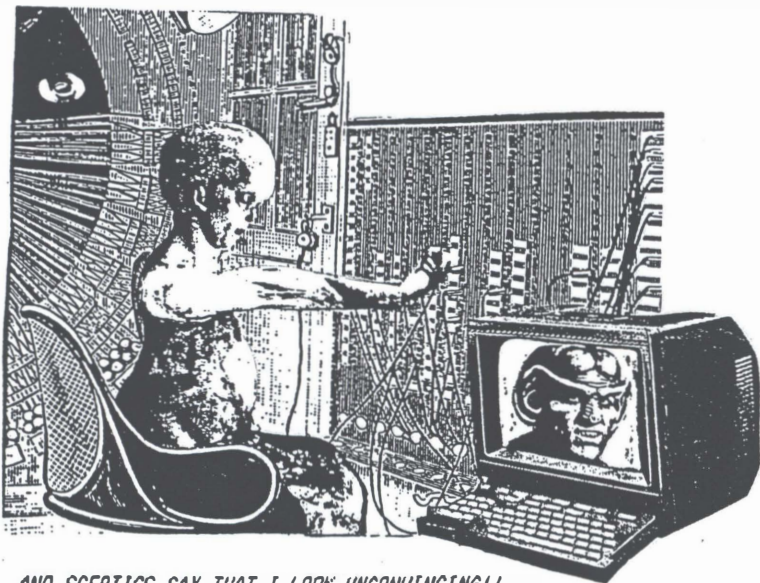
Future BUFORA lectures in Newcastle include Philip Mantle (January 27th 1996), Malcolm Robinson (April 1996) and Jenny Randles (July 1996). Details will be given in future issues of Strange Daze.

Note also that there will be a one day BUFORA conference on the abduction phenomenon, to be held in Sheffield on Saturday 27th April 1996. The provisional line up of speakers is to include Philip Mantle, Mike Wootten, John Spencer and American writer Whitley Streiber. There will be more details as they become available.

SANTILLI/ROSWELL FILM.

Readers may like to construct their own news item from the following words and phrases:

Ray Santilli; Roswell; alien bodies; Philip Mantle; BUFORA; 1947; weather balloon; hoax; Stanton Friedman; Quest International; analysis; controversy rages on; heads will roll; etc.



AND SCEPTICS SAY THAT I LOOK UNCONVINCING!!

Other space debris...

Watch out for the US grunge rock band, The Foo Fighters. They are obsessed with UFOlogy, and even their record label is called Roswell.

Source: NME, July 1995.

The RAF are currently dealing with the USAF to purchase a number of Stealth F-117B aircraft, a streamlined version of the F117A. They will eventually replace Britain's Tornado jet fighters. Expect increased reports of black triangles up and down the UK from early 1996.

Source: Flight International, July 1995.

It had to happen - You can now go on the Roswell tour, which ends up at the alleged crash site in Corona. Also available are samples of rock and dust from this area for the sum of 8 dollars. Amazing.

(Does anyone want to buy some twigs from Rendlesham Forest? Only £5 each... - Ed.)

Source: UFO Magazine. June 1995; International UFO Library Magazine, 1994

Ex-astronaut Gordon Cooper claims a film shot in 1957 shows the landing of a UFO at Edwards Air Force Base in California. The object was disc shaped with a tripod arrangement on the underside. As the camera crew got closer the object took off at high speed. The whole incident on film was sent to Washington for analysis and that was the last Cooper heard of it.

Source: FATE Magazine, June 1995.

Columbia pictures are making "Men In Black" based on those sinister characters who have been known to harass UFO witnesses. It stars Tommy Lee Jones, and should be in local cinemas early next year.

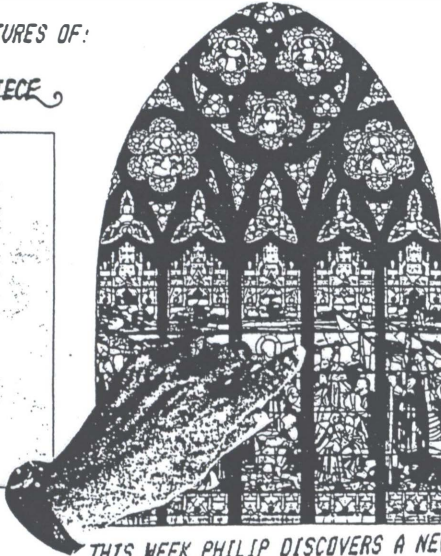
Source: CINESCAPE magazine, June 1995.

Compiled by Craig C. Jackson.



THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF:

PHILIP MANTELPiece



THIS WEEK PHILIP DISCOVERS A NEW
WINDOW AREA.....

LETTERS. Because of the importance of some of the letters received here at Strange Towers, the letters section has been moved to the front of this issue.

First of all, I asked Eric Morris of the British UFO Studies Centre to write in. I hope that this taster will persuade some of our more distant readers to travel into Newcastle on 28th October to hear Mr Morris talk.

Dear Dave,

The British UFO Studies Centre (BUFOSC) was formed in 1994 after I had a three year break from Ufology to concentrate on a nursing course. Once I completed the course I decided to attend a lecture by Jenny Randles

at a local library, and after it finished we spoke in depth as I was the Regional Investigations Coordinator (RIC) for the South West of England for BUFORA between 1977 and 1985, and then RIC for the North Midlands between 1985 and 1990. Although I never "fell out" with BUFORA, I did feel a lack of support over a UFO crash in Cornwall which I wanted to re-investigate when I moved North. However, I do believe I have a good friendship with many BUFORA members, including Philip Mantle, the Director of Investigations. Jenny asked me during this conversation if I would consider forming another UFO group and after some thought set up a small UFO group locally. I advertised for members and was pleasantly surprised at the response. After all, when I resided in Plymouth I held meetings and very few people turned up (Usually just me and a colleague!!) so I was very reticent about holding meetings again. What I did was to hold them at home, thus lessening the financial costs and to my surprise about 20 people turned up, and regularly still do. As with most groups we have the drifters but there are a number of steadfast people in BUFOSC. Obviously, as with most "new" groups there are teething problems and a few months ago two members who we thought were reliable started to cause "ripples" within the group and stated that I was not involving them with BUFOSC activities, however one was made treasurer and the other Magazine Editor, both had been on investigations. Eventually four of them decided to leave BUFOSC and set up their own group in Crewe, however they have now ceased all interest in Ufology, and when I read out their letter at a BUFOSC meeting several members expressed their relief at the announcement of their resignations! Since then BUFOSC has gone from strength to strength, with us raising over £700 in three months and we now own our own phone/fax, photocopier, tent, and have funds to travel the country investigating cases. We are going to Cornwall to pick up some photos of a UFO crash last year. We have a busy schedule next year, we hope to raise over £3000 for equipment. So BUFOSC is in a very healthy position with some very good members, Robert Higgins, an ex-RAF supply officer is Co-Director, Ron Lalek a teacher is treasurer, Dawn Lee is BUFOSC Secretary and my wife Linda is General Organiser!

BUFOSC meet every three weeks, in various locations to cater for members from North Wales, Staffordshire, Manchester and Runcorn. The meetings are held in members homes where we have no time limit on meetings although we adhere to an agenda. BUFOSC also offer talks and lectures and as well as this we produce INTELLIGENCE, an A4 sized magazine of 16 plus double sided pages relating to investigations and research carried out by BUFOSC members. Bob Higgins works very hard on INTELLIGENCE and we have had a good response from readers. Subscriptions are into 60 plus, as well as exchange

arrangements which are very important contacts to BUFOSC. This is how we make plenty of friends.

In reference to our lecture at the University of Northumbria we aim to highlight "The New Welsh Window Area" which BUFOSC have been investigating for nearly a year. It tantamounts to a "UFO flap" which has remained constant for 9 months culminating in many sightings in North Wales. Margaret Fry, the ex-BUFORA member and Contact UK member, has been unable to investigate recently due to her husband's ill health and BUFOSC have become very well known in North Wales, so much so we have made a television programme (being transmitted 22nd September at 7pm on BBC Wales) and BUFOSC have investigated many sightings ranging from LITS [Lights in the sky] to car chases to actual alien abduction. This is my "forte", Dave, as being a Psychiatric and General trained Nurse I am instigating ways of investigating the abductee. I do not believe in regression and we are devising a "working tool" to investigate them. It will be an aid to every Ufologist when complete. The New Welsh Window Area has been so active that BUFOSC members have been holding regular skywatches in these areas with some interesting results (!) which we will reveal when we come to see you.

I shall also be revealing details of my own investigations into USOs (Unidentified Submersible Objects) which I have been investigating over the years. I did some research whilst in Devon and I have carried this on and recently received a dossier about these from a colleague in Wiltshire who I write to regularly.

All in all Dave, I hope our lecture will be very interesting, we are privileged to be starting NUFORI's season and are looking forward to it immensely.

Best wishes to you and Gloria,

Eric Morris.

Thank you Eric for that comprehensive letter. BUFOSC is certainly one of the rising stars of British UFOlogy, and I wish you every success. This is the first that I have heard of a UFO crash in Cornwall, and I would like to find out more. Perhaps our little grey chums were checking out the local pasty mines, and ventured a bit too close to the ground.

The Return of the Feud Court! Readers are invited at this point to blow the dust and cobwebs off the last issue of Strange Daze, and refresh their memories regarding the Feud Court section that I wrote in July. I must stress at this point that the Feud Court was not intended to reopen old wounds or to stir up trouble; rather, a lot of readers had asked me about some of the UFOlogical carry-ons, and they wanted to find out more. But, if you sow the wind, you should be prepared to reap the plasma vortex. And here

is the response from Britain's foremost UFOlogist and author, Jenny Randles:

Dear Sir,

I thought I should respond to several items in the July 1995 issue of Strange Days.

Firstly, re Craig Jackson's review of "The Complete book of UFOs" (a title, incidentally, imposed by the bookclub). The comment "not exactly in depth" seems to imply it is rather smaller than the 304 page large sized history that it is - which I would have said was more in depth than many books about the subject. The aeronautical corrections are no doubt accurate. However, I should defend my co-author, Peter Hough, if only by pointing out that the assumption that I made these errors - by naming only myself in the review - ignores the 50% of the book that Peter contributed.

Secondly, in the "Feud Court" section I can comment on Beckjord v Hough as the policeman concerned originally wrote to me the day after taking his photograph. Peter and I did some of the initial work together, before he took on most of the investigation. I have spoken with and met the photographer several times and can assure you that he does exist and seems sincere. He did sign over the copyright to Peter simply to prevent having to interface with the public (as he has always insisted on anonymity and refused numerous requests to do TV interviews). On the other hand he wanted the picture to be properly analysed and freely available to the public for their assessment. He has never made a penny out of its public use. Of course, Beckjord wants to see the agreement - perhaps because that would reveal the real name of the policeman - which Peter and I have no intention of sharing against the man's express wishes! The code of practice strictly forbids such a deed. As for Beckjord having the picture enhanced and Hough doing nothing - this is utter tripe. The picture is 400 ASA and grainy. All attempts to computer enhance it are at the limits of resolution. Leading UFO photographic analyst - the optical physicist Dr Bruce Maccabee - tried to do it for us. When we last met in the USA in 1992 he told me that he was very disappointed that enhancement was not possible. As for the enhanced images of this figure that I have seen (complete with horns and other nonsense) these are "filled in" from the blurred mess that emerges out of the computer and owe far more to imagination than any reality. Anyone who has seen Beckjord's hugely magnified pictures of the centre sections of crop circles and the odd faces he says he has found inside them should think twice. As for doing nothing, Peter and I arranged for two separate photographic analyses of the negative and Peter had Kodak's labs in Hemel Hempstead run tests. These were then compared with photographs taken at the site. This work all demonstrated that that the image on the photo is

real and about four and a half feet tall - but cannot tell whether it is a dummy, a child in a suit or a real alien, of course. All this analysis (plus Manchester University laboratory experiments to test the man's compass, psychological assessment of the witness by a clinical psychologist and investigations of the site by the radiological protection board) were written up in Northern UFO News within months of the sighting and have been reported by Peter in numerous articles, lectures and in his and my books ever since. So forgive me if I laugh at Beckjord's frankly stupid claim, as you cite it, that nothing has been done to assess the case.

Turning to Randles v Brookesmith I will add little to your fair coverage, except to say that I replied initially in Northern UFO News because Magonia had long stopped carrying my replies. A forteen Times editor wrote the reply letter they published but attributed to me - without asking - when they expressed regret at having carried Brookesmith's dig in the first place. I did not object, but certainly have no qualms about about telling anybody how many copies of Northern UFO News go out, because (as you must have noticed) it is a labour of love not a commercial venture and has NEVER been advertised anywhere. Between 250 and 300 copies are distributed (it is a subscription only magazine) and it has been going since March 1974 - making it one of the longest running continually edited UFO journals in the World. I dare say if I wanted to I could double or treble the circulation by promoting its existence, but that would make it virtually a full time job for me (as I write and distribute it all on my own) and I have never wanted that. At the moment it ticks over and breaks even. Readers seem to like it as it is.

As to Brookesmith's moans about my writing - well, I have never professed to be an English lit major. I am an investigator. I think I have become practiced at writing, but never regard it as a talent. However, there are many readers out there who respond on the same level - ie they know I am simply telling them what I discover in my own modest words and at a pace they can follow. Artistic writing has its place and can look good - but I think 30 books about the paranormal filled with towering prose and without such evils as split infinitives or the occasional breaking of silly rules like "prepositions are words that you cannot end a sentence with" might infuriate the reader. Most seem happier with language if they are more used to on a day to day basis.

After all, note that with all the updates for Star Trek: The Next Generation the writers were still sensible enough not to respond to the Brookesmith style criticism and reword that famous split infinitive as - "to go boldly" instead of "to boldly go". But then, if folk can work things out

when I really say what I mean, why should I need to say really what I mean just to make the pedantic happy? [Eh? - Ed.]

Then there is Randles v Mantle. There are a few things that need to be clarified about what you write concerning my departure from BUFORA council, although it is basically accurate. Firstly, the date of the BUFORA investigators meeting was long pre-determined as well as being the same weekend every year and Philip was secretary to that meeting, so surely he knew up front what it was. The IUN meeting date was rearranged quite late on, I believe, and I was invited (by Philip) to speak that day. Ordinarily, I would have been delighted and had, as you know, written for and lectured to the IUN (always for no charge) on many occasions. However, as director of investigations I could not forsake my team of people at BUFORA - even though I was told that I would be paid £50 if I went to Newcastle instead; whereas I wouldn't even get my train fare if I went to London to take the investigators meeting. Later Philip Mantle told me there was nothing in this innocent comment - ie I was simply being offered expenses and ironically reminded that this was more than I would get out of BUFORA (fair comment). However, in the context of the time when this invitation happened - ie February 1993 (just before the two meetings occurred) the IUN were in the process of setting up a national investigators network and had I accepted the £50 offer and gone to Newcastle - letting down my BUFORA team - then this might have seemed as if I was selling out.

So - I believe correctly - I chose to stand by my investigators and decline the invitation. I did express my concerns about Philip Mantle's apparently divided loyalties here, as I think was appropriate under the circumstances, but I did so only to John Spencer (then vice chairman, now chairman). He tape recorded that call and says he did so with my knowledge; although I think otherwise. At the investigators meeting - when Philip, of course, did not show up - John urged me to raise my doubts in council, but I advised that the investigators regarded Philip as an asset to the group, did not want to take things further and believed he would eventually decide between his chairmanship of the IUN and his responsibility to the BUFORA investigations team. As such I told John Spencer (in the presence of two other BUFORA officers) that this was the end of the matter as far as I was concerned.

Indeed, it would have been had not Spencer played that tape to Mantle eight months later. Not only was I not asked if it was okay, I was not even told afterwards that it had been played. I just turned up at a BUFORA council meeting a week later to discover that Mantle was demanding my expulsion from council. In the previous week (I am told by other IUN officers it was

after hearing the taped call) he had written to the IUN and resigned.

At the council meeting where this demand was sprung on me, Mantle made no secret of his desire to do more PR work for BUFORA. He was very annoyed that I was involved with "Strange but True?" and that I had done another TV show (I think it was a Granada TV series) he felt that he should have done. The clear insinuation was made that I had "taken over" these interviews from him in some way. I urged the BUFORA chairman to contact both producers and ask them why they chose to work with me - and I urged the chairman to check videos of the programmes to see how BUFORA was promoted. One brought in over 100 sightings. The other gave out the UFO Call phone number. Whilst I have written and recorded this for seven years I do not get paid to do it and it has been making around £3000 profit per year for BUFORA. Needless to say the BUFORA chairman declined to make any such investigations and Philip Mantle declined to remove his claim that I was somehow unreasonably doing media work that he should do instead.

At this point the BUFORA council had just lost a number of key people - such as IUN officer Dave Clarke and Clive Potter. Paul Fuller resigned from council in writing at the very meeting Mantle brought his charges against me. Paul Fuller stated his reasons as BUFORA's change of direction and his dislike for policy decisions being taken which he and I had spoken out against in the previous months. Consequently, I had a large chunk of my support on council cut from underneath me and with BUFORA's chairman refusing to even to make an independent check into facts there seemed little point in relying on the objectivity of the council when it debated these matters. Besides which, Philip Mantle's evident interest in doing a lot more personal media appearances and the plans mooted by council to concentrate all administration, PR and investigation through Philip's house left me unhappy about the direction the group was heading. I - rightly or wrongly - perceived it as a move toward greater public prominence and perhaps away from scientific objectivity. This is a fear that I believe has been justified by what I consider to be the dismal way that the group has handled its public association with the Roswell autopsy footage.

Of course, we are all misquoted by the press. "The Independent" slightly misquoted me by implying I resigned because of the film (despite the same article saying that I resigned a year before the footage was obtained). As it happens I have absolute proof of what I told the paper (a lesson I learnt over the Manchester Evening News v Stanton Friedman affair in 1989). I told them only what happened and they wrongly presumed the rest - but they were not wildly inaccurate. Whilst my departure from BUFORA council was triggered by that phone call, there was a good deal more to it than

that, as you can see.

I attempted to stave off a public row by forcing a meeting with Philip Mantle and John Spencer before I resigned. I suggested that if they really wanted Philip Mantle to be the director of investigations and do all of the media publicity, then I'd support that. I was not interested in fancy titles or media profiles. All I wanted was to stay on council and do things I felt I could do for the group - eg produce case histories and special publications to make money for the group and boost its quality of UFO data that it published. In return, Mantle made clear he wanted me off council - full stop - and it was proposed that I became some sort of president with a completely non electable title that I could keep for life and which would allow me to attend all council meetings, but not to vote. Much as this flattered my ego, I do not agree with anyone in BUFORA being unaccountable to the membership and turned the offer down. I am still puzzled as to why it was seriously contended that I was worthy to hold this position in BUFORA but not to be an ordinary council member. I must admit I cynically suspect it was because council did not want me to have any say in the running of the group, but wanted me to be visibly "on side" as far as the worldwide UFO community was concerned.

This was the final straw for me. I could not support the actions of council and felt the only honourable thing to do was to resign from the board. Nobody tried to stop me and Philip Mantle took on my job immediately - which, I suspect, is what he and John Spencer wanted all along. So much for 20 years of service to the association.

As for "The Independent" - I stand by what I said. Your readers are probably unaware that in this same newspaper in March in an article published in his name (ie - it was attributed as he having written it rather than just as a quote in someone else's piece) Philip Mantle endorses the film alongside plugging the conference. He talks about sceptics having to eat their words, the footage being the holy shroud of UFOlogy and other undiluted statements like this. In an interview on the Internet he is asked about this outspoken promotion and does not say he was misquoted. Instead he justifies it with the words "more than one way to skin a cat". Before I said anything to The Independent in July I asked if Philip Mantle had complained about their usage of his letter/article in March. Evidently he had not. Thus I felt totally justified in criticising his public promotion of the film via a national newspaper to sell tickets at a time when no investigation of that film had been possible by BUFORA. Furthermore, two BUFORA council members told me in early June (a few days after council first saw the film) that there was widespread disbelief amongst BUFORA officers. Consequently, I think it perfectly reasonable to express my reservations

about BUFORA's decision to be publicly associated with something they do not seem to have much faith in and about which they had been denied frequent attempts to conduct any meaningful investigation.

As for terming this "a pact with the devil", this was not, of course, a reference to Santilli himself! I actually have no problem with his promotion of the film as a businessman who has bought a product in good faith. My concerns are with a serious, respected UFO group entering into a pact over this film and running enormous risks as a consequence. Those who sign pacts with the devil court long term disaster by seeking out short term profit. This is exactly what BUFORA has done with this film. The difference is that, if the film is exposed as a fraud, BUFORA's actions run the risk of discrediting the UFO field because their public association with it will be what the sceptics and the media remember - not the barrage of negative opinion by virtually the entire remainder of the UFO community.

BUFORA had other factors to consider, not just its own use of the film footage. I think they badly let the UFO movement down by not being a lot more circumspect - or, at the very least, demanding proof and the ability to investigate the film, before giving Santilli what he needed from them: a respected UFO voice that did not reject the film out of hand.

Sorry, but that is my honest opinion. If you choose to see it as "sour grapes" or "getting my own back" I cannot stop you. But it is neither of those things.

Best wishes, Jenny Randles.

Thank you, Jenny, for that thorough response. A letter such as this deserves a response in itself, and here is some feed back from those involved:

Craig Jackson: Regarding the comments of Jenny Randles on the review of the "Complete Book of UFOs": Peter Hough is mentioned, in the title of the book. My research on stealth and other aircraft has proved to be correct, as Jenny seems to admit. (See "Jane's Military Aircraft of the World", 1993.) Having said all this, I still enjoyed the book, stating in the July issue: "this is a good introduction to UFOlogy and an absorbing read".

Philip Mantle: Yawn.

Editor's response: Concerning the Ilkley Moor entity photographs, Erik Beckjord says in his letter (UFO Times 34) that he has "some favourable analysis quotes from Dr Bruce Maccabee, the famed UFO photo analyst", whatever that means. Perhaps we should get in touch with Dr Maccabee and see who's side he is on these days. I agree with you that over-enhancement can produce some weird and wonderful effects, and Beckjords images are probably wishful thinking.

The impression I get from Beckjord's letter is that he is arguing Hough is using his alleged copyright to "sit" on the photographs, thus preventing other researchers (like himself) from doing important new work. Apologies if I have got the wrong end of the stick here. As a point of interest, if the original photographer is unwilling to reveal his identity, is the copyright contract enforceable? As Beckjord said, "He [Hough] could have had anyone in the pub sign the agreement, for example, saying that they were the photographer".

Thank you for the circulation figures for Northern UFO News, now we all know. I agree totally with your comments regarding the English language. Language is there to let people communicate, and I'm certainly not going to be concerned with a few grammatical errors or split infinitives if it reads well and the message comes across clearly.

Regarding your comments in The Independent, I am happy to accept that you were misquoted, it happens all the time. Tut, tut, just who can you trust to get things right these days?

However, I cannot agree with you on the Roswell film escapade, as my editorial makes plain. What should BUFORA have done with the film? Locked it up in the attic until absolute proof of its authenticity came along? Can such proof ever exist, even? Well, I'm glad that the film is out in the open now, and we can all watch the authentication process unfold, that little bit wiser for having seen the film ourselves. I cannot help but wonder what would have happened if Quest International had had the opportunity to work with Santilli.

I'm sorry that you feel that BUFORA should have rejected the film out of hand. I thought that UFOlogy was all about having an open mind. Silly me.

Now, on to something potentially far more damaging to BUFORA: Readers of UFO Times will be aware that the editor of that journal, Ken Phillips, has been very critical of BUFORA in the past few issues. Well, Ken has now decided to throw in the towel at UFO Times, but continue the assault by other means. This is where we come in...

Dear Mr Newton,

I've heard that your magazine "Strange Daze" loves to do exposés of the BUFORA "Carthorse". [Not exactly, but I'll go along with it if I think there is a valid case - Ed.]

Enclosed herewith is my latest editorial for UFO Times 38 (Nov/Dec 1995) but the chances are it will be censored by BUFORA's Editorial Panel.

Indeed, all my editorials have been totally censored for the past 3 issues! Would you, therefore, print my editorial ...

THE BETTY WOOD ROSEBOWL* AWARD FOR INEPTITUDE AND MALADROIT HANDLING OF UFO REPORTS.

Are you, dear reader, as are Albert Budden and Roy Dutton, an aspiring researcher? Do you wish to access BUFORA case files in order to carry out some sort of evaluation process? Or do you, as I do, simply wish to expose good cases for general discussion amongst interested parties? If you fall into any, or all, of the above categories, then the first thing you must do is apply in writing to BUFORA's Research Department in order that it might fax or post to you any case existing in the archives you wish to inspect.

But calamity! The first obstacle you come up against is the non-reply to your letter.

So what does one do then?

Well, in my experience, one tries to ascertain where the files are kept; a logical step one might declare. The only trouble is: BUFORA does not seem to operate on logic, since no-one really knows where the files and films, etc., are! And if their location was known, it is doubtful whether the rank and file membership would be allowed to view the reports in any case!

So what is going on? Is BUFORA an utterly inefficient body, or is there another agenda to which all files and films are dedicated? Of course, I could not possibly comment on the latter implication since all I shall achieve in so doing is upset their "Lordships" on the council. [Too late! - Ed.] Therefore, I must opt for the former implication: that BUFORA is so inefficient it could not even run a sweetshop!

How long has this inefficiency been going on?

Probably since BUFORA's inception; i.e. 30-odd years ago.

What can be done about the problem?

Nothing! Every attempt at making BUFORA responsible for the free access of case material has failed over the last decade.

For this abject failure, I award BUFORA's R & I Department the Betty Wood Rosebowl Award.

* The History of the Betty Wood Rosebowl is a revelation in its own right. The late Betty was formerly BUFORA's General Secretary and for her dedicated services, BUFORA's Council decided to purchase a rosebowl and to present it to her in recognition for her valuable and tireless work (She also made a mean cup of tea!). However, the Council, being the talking shop it was (and still is!) could not even make up its mind as to what sort of rosebowl

would be appropriate. Indeed, they argued about the matter for such a long time - even as to what sort of inscription should be engraved on the side! - that poor old Betty passed away before she could receive her much deserved award.

This, dear reader, is an example of how our Association is being run: i.e. by cover-up, suppression, silence and bungling ineptitude.

And you have the audacity to want to inspect BUFORA's files? You have got as much hope of achieving that ambition as getting our equally bungling Government out of office.

Sweet Mary, Mother of Christ!

Ken Phillips.

Copies of this editorial have been sent to Magonia, Quest and Strange Daze. Serious charges indeed. Does Ken have a legitimate case against BUFORA? I would be very interested to hear from other researchers who may have experienced problems with BUFORA.

In order to get the official line on Ken's criticism, I went straight to the top: Here is the response of the BUFORA Chairman, John Spencer, to this current wave of criticism:

Date: 15th September 1995

Dear Dave,

Thank you for your letter of 8th September and the enclosures. Thank you in particular for the opportunity to reply to Ken Phillips' letter. Perhaps needless to say neither Quest nor Magonia, to whom he has also sent the letter, have offered us any right of reply.

Not all Ken says is a lie - some of it is only a distortion!

Taking first his general point about BUFORA preventing anyone having access to its files or not knowing where its files are. For some time now two people have been computerising a database and the majority of the files are therefore with those two people. Some are with individual researchers. There have been delays in some of the computerisation due to the rapid development of technology where, quite simply, we changed our mind and revised the technology we were using as an investment for the future. Please remember that we are dealing with a national organisation which has been in existence for over 30 years and whose files run into thousands.

I have already made clear that once a computerised database is available it will be made accessible, subject to witness confidentiality, unilaterally to UFO groups without requesting a quid pro quo (although we would like to think it will encourage them to do the same). It is my personal view, and one I made public in the letter circulated in April this year to all our members through UFO Times, that the information we glean should be broadcast as broadly as possible, again subject only to witness confidentiality. I would also point out that that is one of the main aims of BUFORA. It is in fact the use of the computer and the type of database we are using that would allow for the details to be widely distributed without compromising the witness's position.

Whilst on that subject I would point out that I have always regarded witness confidentiality as paramount and it is worth remembering that Ken Phillips was the person who we

discovered was - quite without BUFORA's knowledge or agreement - sending complete files containing witness names and address to the Ministry of Defence until we stopped him.

On more specific points, I took Ken's usual list of missing files, selected one - the Hampstead video - and requested sight of it. It was with Steve Gamble, the Director of Research. I went to his house (my choice, I had to visit him anyway) and held the video in my hand and saw the correspondence between himself and the witness. Not lost, not being hidden. I promise you he did not take it out of a black hole marked 'Bufora Files'. We are retaining the video at the witness's request because the witness wants us to do more work, he not having agreed with our initial analysis. If the witness wants it back he is welcome to it. Ken has been told time and time again that this video and other files are available, yet he continues to make the same tired claims.

His tired claims are the subject of the next point. Ken has made many suggestions that we have censored his editorials. I cannot believe that anybody who read his last three editorials could possibly believe BUFORA is a censorious organisation. I also cannot believe that either Graham Birdsall or John Rimmer would have allowed anyone to say about them in their own magazines what we allowed Ken to say about BUFORA in UFO Times. However, he simply put the same basic diatribe in every editorial and eventually I did prevent him from doing so, not for censorious reasons, but on the grounds that there was a real fear that he was boring the readership to death! This decision had the unanimous approval of the council and from the letters I have been receiving before and after this it would seem the overwhelming approval of the membership. Many believe that the magazine is now far better than it has been for many years.

Which brings us to the last point: Ken's insistence that BUFORA 'could not even run a sweetshop'. Ken is no longer the editor of the magazine because as an editor he was a very good sweetshop salesman. Based on a bulging file of complaints about the magazine, which many thought should have been renamed 'Free Energy Weekly', I asked Mike Wootton to take back the editing of the magazine from Ken and since he has done so we have received a great many positive comments. The magazine is stronger now than previously, is up to date, and contains items of ufological interest and not just personality sniping.

Ken is becoming a sad and bitter man and it is clouding his otherwise considerable intelligence. If he really cares about BUFORA then he should do as I suggested to several people when I took over as chairman - namely stop whinging and actually do something! (Do I hear an offer for database cataloguing?)

I note the correspondence relating to Jenny and particularly her references to me. I have resisted attempts to be drawn into personalised attacks over the past two years and I will continue to do so now. Suffice to say that I have publicly extended a hand of reconciliation to her in that same public letter (in April) I mention above but to date it has been publicly slapped away from me (her letter of 8th August to you, for example). The next move is therefore Jenny's. (Unfortunately I suspect it will be a several page close-typed A4 reply to this small comment - Jenny's version of what Maggie Thatcher used to call a handbagging!)

Lastly, I would like to comment on your own editorials and the letter you sent Cropwatcher which you enclosed in the package. I have a word of warning for you about this, Dave. When I first read through the editorial and the letter I thought I detected a smattering of common sense and even unbiased even-handedness. On re-reading the letter I found that this was true! On further re-reading the letter - with increasing disbelief - I thought that it was about ufology and not about personalities, about objective thinking rather than polarised indoctrination. With even more astonishment I realised that you were not trying to cut the

feet out from BUFORA or do it considerable harm. Dave, are you sure that you are cut out to be a UFO magazine editor!? You are not likely to last long if you continue with this attitude!

Very best wishes, and many thanks again for the right of reply, Yours sincerely,

John Spencer

Here is another contribution to the Roswell/BUFORA debate, from BUFORA Council member and Investigator of the year, Gloria Dixon:

Dear Editor,

I do find it puzzling to say the least, that there are so many great divides within UFOlogy often focused on personalities rather than the subject itself. This appears to have come to the forefront with even greater emphasis in recent months due to the Roswell footage emerging and Ray Santilli showing a preview of the footage at BUFORA's International Conference at Sheffield in August.

This managed to give some UFO researchers the opportunity to devote pages in their magazines to the unfolding story of the Roswell Footage, with a plot that would make the X-Files look tame! Added to that and according to some researchers BUFORA had a central role within this plot, and rumours and more rumours were in place to create an unmatched script within UFOlogy, which became breathtaking in scope of heresay and often inaccurate information.

I have to say that I feel that the attacks towards BUFORA from some of the UFO community via the press and Internet are unjustified, and worse, not constructive in any sense. One would have thought with a film of this sensational nature surfacing for whatever the reasons behind it, the world UFO community would have worked together in a joint effort, to try and establish just what this footage was and whether, indeed, it was related to the Roswell incident at all, putting their differences aside. But no, not a bit of it, that would have been too easy and straightforward for some. Working together, despite different viewpoints, in a subject that is of great importance for mankind in the understanding of this compelling phenomenon would obviously not prove to be advantageous for some.

There are so many dedicated researchers working within organisations or independently, who must find it, at times, both disappointing and frustrating to come into contact with the discord that presents itself so often within UFOlogy. I wonder how there can ever be a way forward unless we can all work together, agreeing at times to differ, taking all feasible theories on board and examining them. This, surely, will illuminate the

way ahead in the study of this baffling and elusive phenomenon and all its related counterparts. That, however, would be UFOlogical Utopia, and frankly it appears that things are less harmonious in this field of study.

Surely we have responsibility to those people reporting true UFO sightings and inexplicable events, to somehow try and work together sharing information and ideas and really to get on with the subject of UFOlogy!

- Gloria Dixon.

Whatever happens, you know you can always rely on Strange Daze to take us out of reverse, manoeuvre us forwards through the Yugoslavia of Saucer study and accelerate up to overdrive on the narrow path to UFOlogical utopia, etc, etc, etc,... Ed.



In Advance of the Landings: Channel 4's Sci-Fi Weekend by David Sivier.

For UFOlogists everywhere, the main interest of Channel 4's Sci-Fi weekend (Saturday 26th to Monday 28th August) were the programmes "In Advance of the Landing" and "Secret History: The Roswell Incident". "In Advance of the Landing" was based on Doug Currans book of the same name. Subtitled "Folk Concepts of Outer Space" it consisted of interviews of people from all walks of life about their beliefs concerning UFOs and aliens. Stars included representatives of the various Flying Saucer cults, such as the Aetherius Society and the Unarius cult. The Aetherians were at pains to point out that they weren't a cult, presumably meaning that they weren't what I consider to be mind controlled zombies like the Moonies, Scientologists or the unfortunates at Waco. They were then shown charging up their prayer meter with good vibes. This consisted of walking up to the aforementioned object, robed, placing one hand on what could have been a lens, and ardently praying for Peace and Love while raising the right hand in what looked like Churchill's "Victory V" gesture, only with the sign being made with the little fingers, the index and forefingers remaining tightly clenched. Meanwhile, the rest of the congregation chanted the Buddhist "Jewel in the Lotus" mantra, Om Mani Padme Hum. As someone raised in genteel, restrained Anglicanism, I found the fervour with which they tried to squeeze out every last drop of benevolence during their prayers slightly embarrassing. I have to say that I really don't know what to make of the Aetherius Society, or its founder, "Sir" George King. As the voice of Inter-Galactic Parliament, or so a voice told him in his kitchen during the washing up in the '50s, he is in touch with higher intelligences on Venus and Mars. As both are barren and lifeless, I doubt this very much. I can't quite work

out whether he's a benevolent crank who genuinely believes in his calling, or a cynical fraud taking people's money and confidence for a religion which combines bad SF and Eastern mysticism. Possibly a bit of both. Whatever the truth is (who knows, he may even be right!) there's never been any suggestion that he's broken up families or destroyed lives in the same way that L.Ron Hubbard, Sun Myeung Moon or Jim Jones all have done. As far as I can make out, most of the members are entirely genuine in their desire for peace, love and universal brotherhood. And the best of luck to them. I wish there were a few more.

Slightly more suspicious to me is the Unarius Society founded by Ruth "Spaceship Ruthie" Norman. Now in her 90s, "Spaceship Ruthie" claims to be the reincarnation of Moses, Tutankhamun, Galileo and just about everyone else famous in history. Mentally, she's also in contact with the 700 or so planets in the Galactic Federation who are trying to raise our consciousness through her. Like old L.Ron Hubbard, any problems you have today are, according to her, due to traumatic past life experiences. Also like the Scientologists, she sells this doctrine in a series of videos available from her "church". Incidentally, she gets her nickname from driving about in a car with a gigantic model of a flying saucer stuck on the roof. Expounding her doctrine on the screen, as came across as quite like nothing so much as a cosmically aware Barbara Cartland. Cartland, though, is rather more sartorially restrained. Ruthie's robes seemed to be festooned with Christmas tree fairy lights. Clips were shown from one of her videos, showing her shooting through space, all the while smiling benevolently. To my jaded eyes she looked like a Christmas tree fairy with a squib up its rear, superimposed on a space background taken from one of the naffer episodes of Star Trek. Still, I supposed someone must be impressed, otherwise they wouldn't join.

Far more interesting was the interview with Betty Hill, whose experience with her husband Barney have provided the basis for the modern abduction phenomenon. While driving back from a holiday in Canada in 1961, she and her husband saw a UFO following them. Arriving home several hours later than expected, they were plagued for weeks afterwards by recurring nightmares and strange scars and bruises. The Hills sought help from Dr Benjamin Simon, a psychiatrist who hypnotically regressed them to the period of their "missing time". Under hypnosis they recalled being abducted by short aliens with large eyes and long necks (recognise the type?), being medically examined with special attention to their genitals. Betty had some sort of probe inserted into her stomach while a device placed on his groin removed

semen samples from Barney. A star map recalled by Betty was interpreted by one of her friends as showing the star system Zeta Reticuli. And thus was born the continuing myth of the Greys. Barney Hill passed on of cancer some years ago, but Betty is still very much alive. She revealed that she was still in contact with her alien abductors. If she wanted to speak to them, she merely drove out to a certain secluded point, made the appropriate signal and waited for their arrival. Shots were shown of her driving into the woods, pulling over and flashing her headlights several times. The Hill's experience was serialised in a magazine in 1965 and a book, "The Interrupted Journey" by John Fuller, was published two years later. It was made into a TV movie, "The UFO Incident" in 1977. Barney Hill was played by James Earl Jones, now known as the voice of Darth Vader. He has since filled out somewhat, and has gone on to play a succession of police and intelligence chiefs, most recently the CIA chief in the film "True Lies". A clip was shown of the 1977 film in which Betty and a shadowy Barney were shown leaving the UFO, with Betty vowing to remember. All I can say is that James Earl Jones must have been slimmer in those days, otherwise the aliens would almost certainly have suffered hernias carrying him out.

Other clips included a chap who ran a UFO shaped diner on the Canadian border who hoped aliens would one day patronise his establishment, and one chap who had given his beat up Ford truck warp engines and a space ship identity a la Star Trek. The chap in question went around schools talking on astronomy. He had the idea following a question by one of his pupils. A dent in the bodywork had been jokingly marked out and identified as due to "alien attack". However, I think that an elderly lady spoke for all of us, when asked what she would do if aliens landed and approached her. "Wet myself" she said. And so would most of us, I have no doubt. Most people interviewed on the programme seemed convinced that alien life existed elsewhere in the universe and were optimistic that one day peaceful contact would be established. Almost inevitably, it was felt that the aliens would have much to teach us, both about themselves and the nature of the universe. An age of education and enlightenment would thus be brought about.

The real star, however, was Secret History's "Incident at Roswell". By now so much has been written about Roswell that it is almost unnecessary to go into details. For those of you who aren't quite au fait with it, I'll give a brief runthrough. In July 1947 rancher William "Mac" Brazel found strange wreckage strewn on his ranch near Roswell, New Mexico. Reporting it to the local Air Force base, Brazel found himself under arrest and placed in jail. The Air Force, under Major Jesse Marcel, removed the wreckage and released over the air waves and the press that they had recovered the remains

of a "flying disc". This story was abruptly changed by General Ramey to that the remains of a simple weather balloon were recovered. More recent accounts of the incident involve alien bodies being recovered from the wreckage, the post mortems of which are the subject of the film recently bought by pop promoter Ray Santilli for [an alleged] £100,000. Santilli talked to Philip Mantle about the film in issue six of Strange Daze. It's this film which has provided the most controversial proof of the reality of the crash retrieval. Most observers consider it to be a hoax, with one disgusted UFOlogist even alleging that the corpses examined are really doctored female human cadavers. It is this film which has brought Roswell to the fore once again.

Channel 4's documentary spoke to the principal surviving witnesses, including the announcer at the local radio station, KSWS, who was brusquely told by the military not to broadcast that they had a saucer or face being closed down. Brazel's granddaughter was also interviewed, as were the various military staff and their families who were involved in the recovery itself. Several senior intelligence personnel testified to the reality of the alien bodies.

The theories that the object recovered was a Skyhook weather balloon, a balloon RADAR target used for army research, or a Mogul spy balloon used to gain intelligence on Soviet nuclear testing were also examined. Roswell was next to the army's rocket testing range at White Sands and the grim possibility was also considered that the bodies could have been those of the hapless primate crew of a test rocket in an experiment similar to that of NASA's later Project Albert. Roswell was also suspiciously near to the Los Alamos testing range for the atom bomb. The question is therefore not whether something crashed there in Roswell, but what. As one UFOlogist says, "The possibility that the government was trying to secretly recover a damaged device of its own must on this count alone be high on the list of explanations for Roswell". (1).

Similarly, it is obvious that the army was trying to cover something up, and initially at least was prepared to use the rapidly evolving "flying saucer" mythology. In a recent issue of Magonia, "Just Cause" asked the question, "If you were an Air Force intelligence officer, how would you motivate the public to go outside for two to three hour shifts and watch the skies? Answer: Flying Saucers!" (2). The thrust of the article was that the American military deliberately led the public to believe it was seriously considering the possibility of extraterrestrial invasion in 1952 in order to gain volunteers for their Operation Skywatch programme. Skywatch was an attempt to use civilian volunteers as a supplement to RADAR and other

early warning devices to monitor possible Soviet military excursions into American airspace. When inaugurated it was seriously undermanned. When, however, the Air Force began encouraging people to "Watch the skies", their staffing problems were over and the Air Force returned to its usual knee-jerk debunking. If the military could use UFOs as a motivating force in 1952, why not 1947? Stories of "flying discs" could be relied upon to ensure that only cranks would be interested in whatever had come down, and the more rational members of society would be put off the subject simply because the cranks were involved. If we use that logic, then stories of a saucer crash would make a good cover.

Unfortunately, the same stories could be relied upon to generate mass interest and possible panic and social upheaval as the citizens felt their worst fears confirmed. So the myth would have to be jettisoned as quickly as possible. This is how the Roswell incident appears to me, though it still doesn't explain the persistence of reports of alien bodies or the belief of many of the people involved that a real saucer was recovered.

Be that as it may, Roswell is now the Great White Hope of ETH UFOlogy, confirmation that alien beings are visiting our globe, and promising to save the doubters from the hallucination/earthlights school which has rapidly gained ground in the past decade. As a 1990 Gallup poll concluded that 27% of Americans Believed UFOs had touched down and were visiting the Earth, this makes Roswell a serious issue indeed

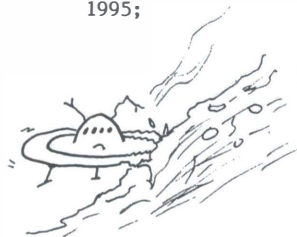
Reactions to the film in the press were "mixed" to say the least. Peter Tory in the Daily Express opined that it was "proof that once sensible and responsible television is going depressingly downmarket" (3) and that "it is difficult to recall anything so plainly ridiculous as C4's "The Roswell Incident" (4). Tory concluded that the film was obviously a fake and the corpse on the slab "none other than that repellent little magic man of television, Paul Daniels.(!)" (5).

Private Eye similarly used the issue of the possibly faked UFO film to make a few satirical points. The first appeared in a cartoon in the Eye TV page making a comment about Janet Street-Porter's teeth. The second was under a photo of philandering Conservative MP David Mellor with his latest female companion. Asking the pertinent question "Is this picture a fake - or the most astonishing evidence that aliens have not only invaded the Earth but are going to get married" (6), it concluded that "the figures appear to be humanoid...but there is something very dubious and bogus about both of them" (7). I have no idea what other more serious papers made of it all. Possibly the same - an immense joke which allows them to poke potentially libellous comments at various targets.

My own view is that despite its obvious "loony" interest, Roswell is a legitimate issue which should be carefully examined. There is now so much written and broadcast about Roswell, including the film "The Roswell Incident", now on video, that Channel 4's sally into X-file country is a decent attempt to clear up some of the issues before the water is muddied even further. There definitely has been a cover up at Roswell. I leave it to you to work out what.

References:

- (1) Spencer, J.: "UFOs - The Definitive Casebook", Roswell Incident, p20;
- (2) "Just Cause", Magonia 48, p8;
- (3) Tory, Peter: "Alien Notion of Quality", Daily Express, 1st September 1995;
- (4) Ibid;
- (5) Ibid;
- (6) Private Eye, 8th September 1995, p23;
- (7) Ibid.



Successful Skywatching, Part 2. By Dave Newton.

In the last issue of Strange Daze we looked at what to wear and what equipment to take when going on a skywatch. This time, let's look at where and when to go, and what you might see.

1. Where to go. Essentially, you can conduct a skywatch from any location where you can see the sky. To get a good all round view of the sky usually means travelling at least a short distance from the centre of town to a good vantage point such as a hill or a field with a flat horizon. Moving a short distance away from a town or village also means that the glare from street lights is reduced at night, allowing your eyes to pick up the fainter objects moving across the sky.

Here in the North East we are quite lucky that the countryside is easily accessible by car. For astronomical purposes, we try to get as far from away from the light pollution of the North East conurbation as possible, and one of our preferred observing sites is by the side of Derwent Reservoir near Consett, County Durham. There, the sky gets pretty much as dark as it is possible to get in the North of England.

Of course, you don't have to travel that far to go skywatching, but a good dark sky site will help you to familiarise yourself with the night sky. Similarly, spending a few nights watching the sky near to an airport will help you to recognise aircraft under different conditions. Carrying

a good book such as Jenny Randles' "UFOs and How to See them" is handy, but no book is a substitute for experience.

If you want to see a UFO, the obvious choice is to hold a skywatch at a location where other people have seen UFOs previously. Certain areas are well known for their UFO activity and are worth visiting. Pendle Hill near Clitheroe, Lancashire and the Pennine Hills generate a stream of UFO reports and the moorland between Leeds, Sheffield and Manchester is possibly this country's best "window area". North of this area, the hottest place to be at the present is Bonnybridge, near Falkirk in Central Scotland. While this window area has received a lot of publicity recently, the region around Edinburgh also produces regular UFO reports. The best sites here are Tranent, near Cockenzie on the coast, and Livingston to the West of Edinburgh. Readers may recall the incident from November 1979 when forester Robert Taylor, an inhabitant of Livingston, encountered a UFO in the young trees just off the busy M8 motorway.

In the North East, there has been activity of late around Stanley, County Durham. This may be due to the vicinity of the Stublick Faults, which are breaks in the Earth's crust. Although there are no active fault lines in this country (like the San Andreas fault in California), fault lines represent areas of geological tension and have been linked with strange lights and UFO activity. (See, for example, "Earthlights" by Paul Devereux) Another series of faults run down Northumberland, starting roughly between Coldstream and Holy Island, passing southwards near Wooler. Readers interested in geology may like to consult geological maps of the North East and pinpoint the exact locations of these faults.

2. When to go. Throughout the article I have assumed that you will be going skywatching at night time, but there is no reason why you can't find a nice comfortable location and skywatch during the daytime. However, around three quarters of UFO sightings occur in the hours of darkness, so night time sessions probably hold the most chance of actually bagging a UFO.

In his book "UFOs: Operation Trojan Horse", John Keel found that sightings tended to reach a peak on Wednesdays, but this has been disputed by other researchers. Other research has suggested possible links between UFO activity and the proximity of the planet Mars, but again this has been disputed. However, there does seem to be a genuine peak in UFO activity around three o'clock in the morning. Be prepared to stay up late.

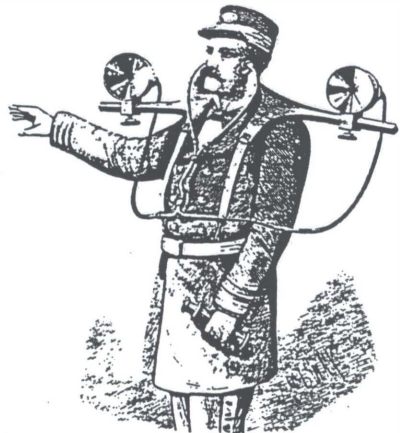
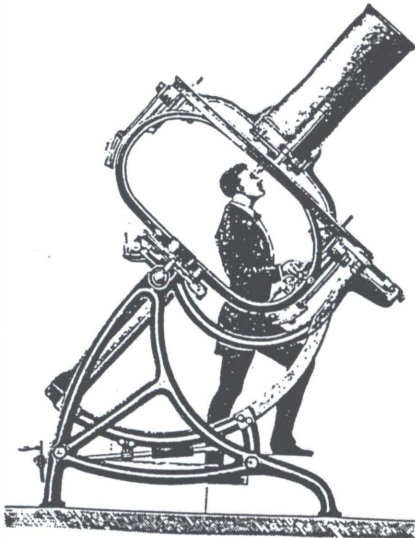
Some researchers also think that the full moon helps increase UFO activity. (Don't ask me why.) Going out around the time of the full moon is actually a good idea, since the increased light level helps you to see

what you are doing and will help to illuminate any objects you might see. If nothing else, the full moon is a glorious sight in a small telescope.

3. What you might see. There are a huge variety of objects up there that have been reported as UFOs, and it is best to try to get familiar with them all. The bright planets, Venus and Jupiter, are often mistaken for UFOs by the public; Venus is bright enough to cast shadows, and not many people realise that. Learn the positions of the brightest stars and planets, and follow their motions across the sky. The Moon also fools people on occasion. It is surprisingly small in the sky, a mere half degree across, but it's bright and that fools the eye into thinking it is much bigger.

On any clear moonless night you should be able to see a couple of meteors streak across the sky. These are particles of dust that burn up in the Earth's atmosphere, leaving a trail that can often appear green in colour. The meteor only takes a fraction of a second to streak across the sky, but the trail can persist for several seconds before fading from view.

Aeroplanes and helicopters can appear very strange from certain angles, made even moreso if the wind is preventing any engine noise from reaching you. This is where binoculars and moonlight come in handy. Make sure that the binoculars are set up correctly - if they are out of focus, they will make something strange look even stranger.



REMEMBER! ELABORATE EQUIPMENT IS NOT ALWAYS NEEDED FOR A SUCCESSFUL SKYWATCH

Satellites are fascinating to watch as they silently arc across the night sky. Some of them move slowly, others move rapidly and may only be visible for a matter of half a minute or thereabouts. Some satellites are faint, others are very bright (eg the Mir space station and the Space Shuttle when it is in orbit). If the satellite enters the Earth's shadow, it may appear to vanish half way across the sky, which is quite strange to observe. Other satellites rotate, and as their solar panels catch the sun the satellite may appear to blink on and off.

Like satellites, objects at high altitude (balloons, high flying aircraft) may still be illuminated by sunlight while it is dark at ground level. Weather balloons are huge objects, and may seem to be closer than they really are.

Other things to watch out for are laser lights and car headlights reflecting off clouds. Airships are rare, but they make very interesting sight at night. Parachute flares are also an unusual sight, but with time and patience you can learn to recognise them, and thus learn to recognise the genuinely strange. Have fun, and be prepared. - D.N.



REVIEWS!!!! [By the editor, unless otherwise stated. So you know who to complain to.]

UFO Times 36, July/August 1995.

Big section on the Sheffield congress and the Santilli film, along with articles on Roswell, Area 51 and Peter Nelson's UFO photograph (from Bellingham in Northumberland) among the usual lively mix of articles and letters. UFO Times is edited these days by Mike Wootten. No subscription price given, free to BUFORA members. Write to BUFORA, 1 Woodhall Drive, Batley, West Yorkshire, WF17 7SW.

The New Ufologist No 3.

Issue three still hasn't dropped through my letter box at the time of writing (13th October), despite it being on sale to the public at the Sheffield Congress back in August. However good the contents may or may not be, I cannot recommend that anyone send money to a magazine that treats it's subscribers in such an appalling manner. The Editorial panel can take my copy (which presumably they still have) and shove it.

INTELLIGENCE No 3, June 1995.

The magazine of BUFOSC, to which the main contributor is Eric Morris. Not the best print quality in the world, and the odd mistake (not unlike the rag known as Strange Daze), but this is good regional UFOlogy and is

well worth reading. BUFOSC are obviously a serious and dedicated bunch of UFOlogist, and I expect their magazine to go from strength to strength. Write to BUFOSC at 52 Dart Walk, Wharton, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 3JE.

Magonia 53, August 1995.

Another excellent issue of the magazine that deals with contemporary vision and belief. Contains intelligent and thorough articles, this time dealing with hypnotism ("Blue is the colour" by Michael Goss), contemporary UFOlogy ("Blood, vision and brimstone" by Peter Rogerson), plus reviews, letters and the final installment of the Randles -v- Brookesmith correspondence. I particularly like the editor's comment: "This is definitely the end of the slugfest, the referee stopping the fight because of the threat of brain damage to the spectators."

Essential reading. £5 for four issues, payable to John Rimmer, John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Chuchyard, London SW14 8HB.

OVNI October 1995.

The monthly magazine by Omar Fowler's Phenomenon Research Association. It always contains a few short, interesting articles and a handy monthly sky guide, but is very accepting of the extraterrestrial hypothesis. This issue also contains one big mistake that I cannot let pass without comment: According to the Editor's comment at the bottom of Gordon Millington's article on the moon, "The only known space mission to the moon in the past 20 years was the recent highly-classified Defence Department funded CLEMENTINE unmanned probe, which photographed the entire moon surface. No photos released." Sorry folks, but as we reported in a past issue of Strange Daze, all of the Clementine Lunar images were released onto the Internet. Have fun browsing through the million or so pictures, I have. In fact, why not write to the Pentagon for more information, as I found them to be very obliging. Address on request.

Write to Omar Fowler, OVNI, 94 The Circle, Sinfen, Derby, DE25 9HR.

The Aetherius Society Newsletter Sept 1995.

Welcome to the branch of UFOlogy that deals with prayer power, and funny names like "Karmic Lord Mars Sector Six". No kidding. Too weird for me, but in general I suppose it's all harmless fun.

Write to The Aetherius Society, 757 Fulham Road, London SW6 5UU.

The Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society Sept 1995.

Not usually on the review list for Strange Daze, but this issue contains two articles of interest for UFOlogists: "The Natural Selection of Universes Containing Intelligent Life" by E.R. Harrison, and "Some thoughts on the implications of Faster than Light Interstellar Space Travel" by I.A.Crawford.

The latter article looks at Alcubierre's work on superluminal travel within general relativity, as covered also in Strange Daze No 4. Essential reading for those with an interest in warp drives and general relativity.

Annual subscription: £87.00. Go down the library and read it there.

RAPPORT No 3, Autumn 1995.

Edited by Ken Phillips, this is the magazine of the Witness Support Group, and has a different, witness centred approach to the subject. Very good reading, it contains letters, articles and poetry from witnesses. This is well worth reading, check it out and see if you like it. £2.00 a copy, write to the WSG Coordinator: George Spurgeon, 18 Marie Lloyd House, Wenlock Barn Estate, Murray Grove, London, N1 7PU.

Fortean Times.

UFOs, odd coincidences, bizarre happenings, cryptozoology, etc. Just buy it. Always excellent. Bimonthly, £2.00 a copy. Available from all good newsagents.

Lobster 29, June 1995.

Produced every six months, this magazine deals with conspiracies and shady politics so it sometimes touches on the cover-up end of UFOlogy. If this sounds like your thing, write to the editor, Robin Ramsay, at 214 Westbourne Avenue, Hull, HU5 3JB. £2.50 a copy, £5 a year.

ENIGMAS 41, August/September 1995.

This is the bimonthly magazine from Malcolm Robinson's Strange Phenomena Investigations (SPI) group, and it's a cracker. Packed with all sorts of interesting articles, cases and letters, I can highly recommend this one. You won't regret subscribing so get out your cheque books: £11.50 for five issues, from Malcolm Robinson, 41 The Braes, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire, FK10 2TT, Scotland.

Northern UFO News 171, September 1995

A Roswell footage special, including "has commercialism taken over UFOlogy?", as well as brief cases, reviews and other news. Always worth a quick read to get the Randles' eye view of events.

£7 for six issues, payable to Northern UFO News. Write to Jenny Randles, 11 Pike Court, Fleetwood, Lancashire, FY7 8QF.

The Ley Hunter 123

Subtitled "The Journal of Geomancy and Earth Mysteries. Ancient Wisdom, Landscapes and Sacred Sites". A wonderfully produced magazine dealing with sacred sites, megaliths, shamanism, funeral paths, etc., that often touches on the subjects of UFOs and spirits. The letters section, "Readers Forum"

is a must read. As Paul Devereux says in his editorial, "...only TLH brings you such a high-level range of material at the cutting edge of research, thought and debate related to our unusual but dynamic inter-disciplinary field of interest."

Three issues a year for £5.80 payable to "Empress". Write to TLH, PO Box 92, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 2BX.

3rd Stone 21, Midsummer 1995.

Produced by the Gloucester Earth Mysteries Society, this is another excellent journal. It contains a little more humour than The Ley Hunter and the subject matter is broader. (Co-editor Danny Sullivan is also the Associate Editor of TLH.) This issue contains some great articles on ancient sites, Neolithic man, Atlantis, the Charles Walton murder mystery, and alien abductions (by Albert Budden). I really look forwards to seeing the next issue of this journal, but I must remember to take my Balaclava off before reading it. Three issues a year for £7.00 payable to Gem Publications. Write to GEM, PO Box 258, Cheltenham, Gloucester GL53 0HR.

The X Files comic.

For those of you who can't get enough of the TV series you can now buy the novels, the videos, the T-shirts, the posters, and the monthly comic. It is actually surprisingly good, the writers have obviously done their homework and are familiar with the range of Fortean material. And the characters are starting to look more like their TV counterparts, too. Monthly, £1.25 from newsagents.



NORTH EAST CASES by Gloria Dixon.

[We not only receive UFO reports here at NUFORI, but also regularly come across cases of the paranormal and sometimes "ghost stories". Here, for a change, are some of those peculiar tales. - Ed.]

In September of this year, my family and I attended a memorial service to 77 Squadron at Elvington, near York. This is now the Yorkshire Air Museum and a visit to this amazing place is like a timewarp, allowing those who visit to capture the atmosphere of a wartime flying station and the courage of those who fought and died serving their country during the Second World War. My reason for being there was because my father, who died suddenly this year, was a mid-gunner with 77 Squadron and flew many missions out of Elvington. He flew with Sid Judd, Captain and pilot of the Halifax aircraft on their sorties together. Sid relayed to me two intriguing stories during my day at Elvington...

From the London Gazette:

Pilot Officer S.E.C. Judd (173931) R.A.F.V.R.; 77 Squadron.

One night in June 1944 this officer was pilot and captain of an aircraft detailed to attack Sterkrade. On the return flight the aircraft was intercepted by a fighter, which attacked with much persistence. In the engagement, Pilot Officer Judd manoeuvred with great skill and finally the attacker was driven off and believed to have been destroyed. The bomber had sustained extensive damage, however, and one wing was on fire. Nevertheless, Pilot Officer Judd set a course in an attempt to reach home. Before the English coast could be reached the fire had spread considerably and Pilot Officer Judd was forced to bring the crippled aircraft down on to the sea, a task he skilfully accomplished. All the crew [my father was one of the crew] got safely aboard the dinghy and were subsequently rescued. In the face of most harassing circumstances, this gallant pilot set an example of the highest order.

On the night he was shot down, Sid's parents experienced an unusual event during the night. They were asleep at the time and were both awoken by footsteps coming along the gravel path which led to their house. They then heard the doorbell, which kept on ringing. They went downstairs anxiously wondering who was at their door in the middle of the night to discover there was no-one there or anywhere else nearby.

The footsteps and ringing of the doorbell happened at the exact time that their son's Halifax ditched hundreds of miles away in a very cold North Sea...

Sid also told me about another incident which happened during the war, which he was told about towards the end of the war.

This incident occurred at a wartime bomber station in Lincolnshire. On these bomber stations during the war there was always an airman in a caravan at the end of the runway, who would be responsible for the bombers taxiing out on their missions just before they took off from the runway. On this particular night during WWII the airman in the caravan was very surprised to see a first world war biplane land on the runway at this airfield. The pilot, dressed in full World War One flying kit, got out of the cockpit and walked towards the caravan, came in the door, and handed the stunned airman a note with the number of a Lancaster on it that had taken off on a bombing raid that night. He told the airman that this Lancaster had crashed and all the crew were killed. He then left the caravan, got back into his plane and took off. The airman radioed the control tower to give them this information, and he was immediately taken off duty and replaced!

Several hours later the control tower received information that this specific Lancaster as recorded on the paper given to the airman had crashed and all crew had been killed.

The crash had occurred at the precise time of the visit from the pilot of the biplane.

Another incident, this time related to me by my father, took place many years ago, in the 1960s. He was staying in the Officers Mess at an old wartime bomber station. One night he awoke, needing the bathroom. Walking along the mess corridor, he passed a fair haired young man walking towards him. He was dressed in full World War 2 flying kit. It occurred to him several seconds later that this was rather odd, and the next day whilst having a drink in the bar he mentioned it to the other officers. They informed him that this person had been seen by many other officers, dressed in exactly the same way. They said that it was someone who had been killed in action during a mission from that flying station.

[Are these examples of UFOs - Unidentified Flying Officers? - Ed.]

Life Beyond Death?

About a year ago I had a lady, Joan H., contact me from Saltburn, Cleveland, about a lifetime of paranormal and inexplicable events that she had experienced. She very kindly sent me a lengthy manuscript documenting these events, which are all intricately bound together.

After 21 years of marriage had ended for Joan in 1963, she left Hitchin where she had been living at the time to go and live in Biggleswade, Bedfordshire. Here she met Morris whilst on a course in London, and they began a close relationship. She describes him as a lovely person, the eldest of six children but five years younger than herself, who got along very well with Joan's teenage children.

One warm Sunday evening in June 1964, Morris and Joan were walking hand in hand in a cornfield, when suddenly Joan describes being in pitch darkness. When her eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, she could see tallish houses facing her, across a fairly narrow street that she had never seen before. In front of one of the houses were a group of shadowy figures, excitedly talking and pointing towards her right, where the road curved away into the distance. She could slowly see better and was surprised to see the attire of these people. The men wore hose and buckled shoes, breeches and jackets in a coarse material and the women were dressed in long black dresses and long white aprons, buckled shoes and lace caps. Although appearing to talk very animatedly she could not hear their voices, and everywhere

was silent. She felt she was in a different century and couldn't understand what she was doing there. Joan then took stock of her own appearance and realised that she, too, was wearing a long black dress with the apron, buckled shoes and cap. She felt frightened and looking behind her realised she had been standing in front of a stone cottage, which appeared like a shadow (as did the people).

She then heard the sound of an approaching horse, and a large cart appeared with a man walking beside it. The horse was pulling a hay wagon and the man stopped the horse in front of where she was standing, looked at Joan sadly and said, "Morris and Bill are both dead on the cart". Joan ran around to the back of the cart and on the hay lay Morris and his brother Bill, dead. As Joan burst into tears, the shadowy figures crossed over the road and hands touched her, voices said, "I am so sorry, so sorry. They were both so young". Instantly, Joan was back in the cornfield walking with Morris. Morris was still talking about the same subject he had been before Joan found herself in another time, and obviously he had not noticed anything. She decided not to mention this to Morris or to his brother Bill.

A year to the day after these experiences, Joan and Morris were sitting in her dining room talking about ideas for their honeymoon, as they planned to marry the following year. Morris suddenly broke off what he was saying and stared past Joan with a look of wonder on his face. He said, "Where am I? It's so beautiful". He fell back without another word and Joan ran for help to a neighbour who was in the ambulance service. The neighbour ran towards her house, telling Joan to ring for a doctor at the phone box. Joan was told that an emergency doctor would be straight over. Joan ran back to her house where her sixteen year old son opened the front door and said that the neighbour had asked her to wait upstairs. Joan climbed her stairs feeling very worried and then remembers hearing a car and the front door closing. She believed that the doctor had arrived to look at Morris. Feeling that the doctor was taking a long time, she felt that maybe the doctor was making a call from the phone box for an ambulance, but after looking out of the window she saw the phone box and cul-de-sac were deserted. The house seemed to be very silent when suddenly a man's voice called to her from the bottom of the stairs, "I'm a doctor, can I come up?" Joan ran to the landing to see a fairly tall, athletic young man with short sandy hair, wearing a tweed jacket and grey trousers climbing the stairs two at a time. He asked Joan to sit down and she sat side by side with him on her bed while he put an arm around her shoulders to comfort her. He said "Morris is dead. It was over in less than a minute after he collapsed and he felt no pain. A small clot of blood blocked his artery" he explained. He then

went on to tell Joan that she would see Morris again and that there was life after death, and that this is only our training ground. "Don't worry", he said, "you will be helped". Joan then remembers seeing him rise to his feet ready to leave and again, he told her not to worry. He paused at the door and said, "Your own doctor will be along later when he gets back. He will give you something to ease the pain".

Morris was buried at Langford Church that week, and on the Sunday Joan attended an evening service at Biggleswade Parish Church with Morris' family. Joan had been home only a short time after this when one of Morris' brothers arrived with terrible news: Bill, the brother Joan had seen with Morris on the hay wagon, had just died without any warning the same way that Morris had. They are both now buried at Langford Church. Morris was aged 39 and Bill was 37.

About a month after these events Joan felt the need to thank the young, sandy haired doctor who had comforted her. She asked the ambulance man who it had been, and he told her it had been a Doctor Robinson and told her where the practice was in town. When Joan went to the surgery, she was surprised to see a much older man with white hair. "Morris Pryor", he said, "Yes, I remember, he was young, such a pity, he was dead when I arrived". He looked at Joan with curiosity and said, "I didn't see you". Joan replied that she had been upstairs with the other doctor. "There was no other doctor" he said. Joan then told him about the sandy haired doctor, and that he had explained the cause of Morris's sudden death. Dr Robinson stopped her in amazement, and told her that a post mortem had been performed on Morris soon after his death. The sandy haired doctor had informed her of the exact cause of death, but before it could possibly have been known...



An Animal Mutilation report.

The phenomenon of cattle/animal mutilations is best known from the cases that have come out of the mid-western and southern states of the U.S., but mutilations have also occurred in this country. I suspect that there are many more cases of mutilations that are never reported because the phenomenon is little known outside of UFological and Fortean circles. Many thanks to Mr D. Colman, who wrote in with this description of a mutilated sheep:

"At approximately noon on August 12th [1995], my wife and myself were walking from Edinburgh Airport to the A8 road when we spotted, 20yds into a field, a sheep lying on its left side. It appeared to have been decapitated. I went for a closer look and discovered that the sheep had not

been decapitated but had a large square hole cut under the neck. The right ear appeared to have been cored out and the right eye was missing. There were no signs of a struggle, or any blood worth noting. The rectal and genital areas appeared to be intact. One small piece of black matter lay fairly close by. The cuts appeared to be smooth and were black, as most of the innards of the animal were. I managed to take one snap of the injuries with a fun camera (the last shot on the spool). I returned later that afternoon and managed to make a short video of the scene which will be analysed in the near future. I hope that this will give an accurate account of what may have happened to this animal."

Please write in if you have ever come across a case of animal mutilation. It is an unpleasant and hopefully rare phenomenon, but some cases do come to light from time to time. Also, please ~~write~~ in with your own thoughts on the causes behind mutilations: Theories include natural predators, Satanists, vampiric alien beings, and death by ball lightning. Any more suggestions?

A "Flying Triangle" report.

The past few years have seen a dramatic rise in the number of reports of dark, triangular shaped UFOs that are usually seen flying low and at night. They range in size from small aircraft up to football pitch sized monsters. The military are certainly flying different types of stealth aircraft, which seem to be variations on the black triangle shape. Whatever the origin of these UFOs, the place to go if you want a good chance to see one is Stanley in County Durham, where there has been some unusual aerial activity over the past few months. Our own Craig Jackson went down there last month and managed to spot one, here is a brief synopsis:

Date: 29/9/95

Time: 9.50pm

Object: A black triangle with three lights, a pulsing red light on the nose and two steady white lights on the other corners.

Size: About that of a Harrier jump jet.

Sound: A high pitched noise, a screaming like an aircraft going into a dive.

Duration of sighting: About 30 seconds.

Height: Just above the roof tops! Well below cloud level.

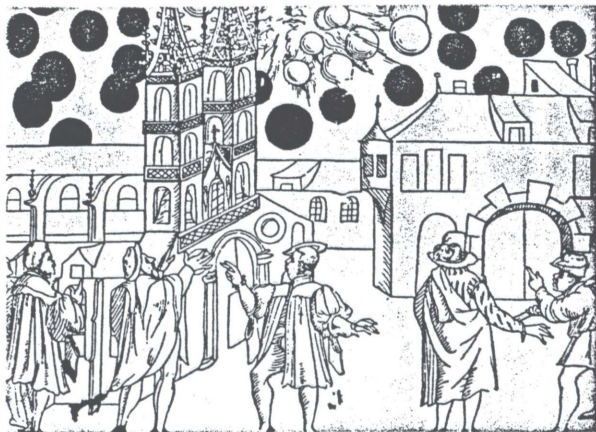
Any more reports of triangular UFOs and other observations would be very much appreciated. Perhaps the local activity has now moved to Stanley from Chopwell, a few miles to the North West, where I have heard many rumours of strange lights and funny going on in the woods...

Would any Chopwellians like to come forwards with their experiences?

A Fireball Meteor over the North East.

Many observers reported seeing the sky light up and hearing a loud noise on the night the 28th July. This was due, apparently, to a very large and bright meteor that appeared over Alston, Cumbria, at about 10.53pm and travelled over Washington and Sunderland before finally burning up over the North Sea. The meteor fragmented with a series of rapid flares as it passed over Washington, splitting into two or three main parts. Witnesses have spoken of a tail of sparks from the meteor, which it is estimated reached a maximum brightness of magnitude -20. The sound was described variously as a bang or explosion, a sonic boom, gunfire, or thunder. There are four reports of the sound being loud enough to blow curtains in or out of open windows. Many car alarms were set off in Sunderland, probably from the effect of the sonic boom.

Any meteorite fragments would probably have fallen into the North Sea, although there is a small possibility some minor pieces may have fallen over Washington or Sunderland. If you recall seeing anything that night, or indeed if anything fell though your roof on the evening of the 28th, please get in touch. More information on this meteor is given in the October edition of Sunderland Astronomical Society's S.A.S. News.



COMPETITION: The above woodcut DOES NOT represent the good people of Sunderland watching the July fireball event. Write in with the correct date and place, and win a copy of Alan Watts' "UFO Quest" reviewed last issue.

Next issue, January 1996.

Special thanks to Jon Lee, for helping with this issue: Cheers, chief.

Dave Newbs

WITHOUT CONSENT

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